



Speech By  
**Dale Last**


**MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN**

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## **FISHERIES (COMMERCIAL FISHERIES) REGULATION, FISHERIES (GENERAL) (VESSEL TRACKING) AMENDMENT REGULATION, FISHERIES AMENDMENT DECLARATION**

### **Disallowance of Statutory Instruments**

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (6.22 pm): I rise to speak in support of the disallowance motion put forward by the member for Gympie. Those on this side of the House are as much about supporting a healthy and sustainable fishing habitat as any other Queensland in this state, but we need to delve into this regulation to realise the impact it is having across Queensland. There is not a one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to fishing in Queensland, particularly when it comes to regulation. When we look at Queensland and we talk about commercial fishing operations, I ask members to look at the gulf and the Torres Strait and then come down the coast through the Burdekin, Whitsundays, Fitzroy and South-East Queensland. There are significant differences in those fishing zones so a one-size-fits-all approach is never going to work.

At the heart of that is the need for consultation with the industry. That is so important because, if we are led to believe what those on the opposite side of this House say today, commercial fishers support these regulations. If the number of commercial operators who are coming into my office is any indication, that could not be further from the truth. People like Neil Green and his daughter came to my office. He wants to hand over his fishing business to his daughter, but they are now questioning whether there is any future for his daughter. Neil Green is a legend in Queensland. What he does not know about fishing is not worth knowing. Members should go down to Bowen and talk to Terry Must from Arabon Seafoods and Brett Bauer. The member for Whitsunday knows him. At the end of the day, these commercial fishermen have been in the industry for decades. They will tell members now that their livelihoods are under threat and they do not see a future in the fishing industry anymore.

The fishing fleet in Bowen has been decimated because of this philosophy that somehow commercial operators are out there raping and pillaging fish stocks and the sea. That could not be further from the truth because they are the farmers of the sea. It is in their best interest to make sure fishing stocks are sustainable. They understand what it means to fish localities all up and down the coastline, yet there are assertions that these commercial operators are somehow decimating fishing stocks. I think they have just become easy targets because they are so regulated. What is happening is that we are seeing them driven out of the industry. If we are not careful, we are not going to be able to go down to the local seafood shop for a feed of fish and chips because there will be nothing left. We will be eating something that is farmed overseas from Vietnam or China. I know that I would rather eat seafood locally caught in Queensland. Allan Bobberman from QSIA said—

The commercial sector's put up proposals to government, ways we could move forward at a slower pace to make this work but this just seems to be like a runaway train and all I can see is it ending up as a complete train wreck.

That is a shame! If we have a look at the commercial sector in this state, we see there is no light at the end of the tunnel for commercial fishing operators right up and down the coastline of Queensland. This is not about making it open slather for those commercial fishing operators; this is about providing an avenue for those operators to continue to work and have a livelihood going forward. At the moment, they are not seeing that.

I want to talk about one particular aspect that has caused a lot of grief in my patch, and that is the vessel monitoring system. What a debacle the rollout of that particular system has been! Operators have been unable to put out to sea because their tracking devices have malfunctioned. Other operators have just gone out to sea and their device has malfunctioned so they have had to return to land. It has been an absolute debacle. The quality of the units has been substandard, the implementation has been botched and it continues to be a nightmare for all of our commercial operators right up and down the coastline.

In closing, I support this disallowance motion for the reason that our commercial operators need more consultation. It is very simply put by the QSIA, which said—

A halt and review of the Queensland fisheries reform process including (a) a review of quota management arrangements, (b) a review of zoning and (c) modelling of the impacts of the reform on the catch to consumer seafood supply chain.

It is pretty simple stuff. I do not think there is anything too complex in that. They just want to be consulted; they want to be understood. They have solutions for a sustainable fishing habitat in Queensland, and we should listen to them because they live and breathe it.